

More Details from Blast That Injured Man

Written by Steve Frank
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There's more detail about the investigation of the Watauga County Sheriff's Office into an explosion in the Zionville community last week that seriously injured Kevin L. Isaacs at his 179 Lola Perry Road in Zionville. With further information obtained from Isaacs, deputies obtained permission to search the location based on the description given by the victim. There, deputies and other law enforcement personnel spotted 10 blasting caps lying on the ground. The Wilkes County EOD (Explosive Ordinance Detachment) Unit and was notified and immediately responded, and secured the blasting caps, then conducted a more thorough search of the area. That led to the discovery of 17 additional loose caps, then an entire case of 25 was discovered – all in all over 120 caps were located and rendered inert. The release says Boone Fire assisted with scene safety to establish a safe path for Wilkes EOD to remove all the items, then an explosive pit was constructed on site and the caps were destroyed by Wilkes EOD using a controlled and precise charge to render the caps neutral and no longer capable of detonation. Major Doug Cotton, commander of the Wilkes EOD, called the caps "some of the oldest and most volatile explosive devices I have ever seen in my 25+ years with EOD." It was believed that the caps were 20+ years old.

Sheriff Len Hagaman said, "I would like to especially thank Wilkes County Chris Sheriff Shew and Major Doug Cotton and his EOD Technicians for their prompt response and their willingness to utilize their expertise and equipment in identifying and rendering these devices safe. Their time and dedication is deeply appreciated. Because of our sharing of resources and personnel with the Wilkes County Sheriff's Office, we are able to save both the Wilkes and Watauga County taxpayers literally thousands of dollars, not to mention an expedited response that is unsurpassed." He also said, "I would also like to thank Town of Boone Fire Chief Jimmy Isaacs and his personnel as he, acting as an operations chief, coordinated other response agencies, ground safety tactics, and outside resources. Of utmost importance is that I would like to remind everyone that any explosive device, no matter how small (such as a blasting cap) can have devastating consequences if handled incorrectly. Many old family shops and farms may have blasting caps or even dynamite that has been lying around unused for years. Aged explosive devices become unstable and unpredictable. If anyone comes into contact with old explosives, please contact the Watauga County Sheriff's Office immediately."